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Message Text

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44
ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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R 131027Z OCT 76
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7156
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 2472

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, LA
SUBJECT: ANOTHER REPORT OF LPDR LEADERSHIP SPLIT

REF VIENTIANE 2034

1. A WELL INFORMED LAO WOMAN TOLD EMBASSY OFFICER OF A SPLIT WITHIN THE TOP LPDR LEADERSHIP BETWEEN PRO-VIETNAMESE AND NATIONALIST FACTIONS. THE LAO WOMAN, WHOSE HUSBAND'S PARENTS HAVE LONG BEEN WELL CONNECTED WITH THE COMMUNIST LEADERSHIP IN LAOS, SAID THE PRO-VIETNAMESE FACTION WAS LED BY PARTY SECRETARY GENERAL KAYSONE PHOMVIHANE AND POLITBURO MEMBER NOUHAK PHOUMSAVAN. SHE SAID THE RIVAL NATIONALIST FACTION WAS LED BY POLITBURO MEMBERS PHOUMI VONGVICHIT AND SOUPHANOUVONG. SHE SAID OTHER MEMBERS OF THE NATIONALIST FACTION WERE HER RELATIVE SINGKAPO SIKHOTCHOUNLAMANY, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS; SOUK VONGSAK, CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBER; MRS. KHAMPHENG BOUPHA, CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBER AND PRESIDENT OF THE PATRIOTIC WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION; HER HUSBAND, KHAMPHAY BOUPHA, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS; AND SISANA SISANE, MINISTER OF INFORMATION.
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SHE ADDED THAT POLITBURO MEMBER KHAMTAY SIPHANDONE AND CENTRAL

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COMMITTEE MEMBER SANAN SRITHICHAK WERE IN THE PRO-VIETNAMESE FACTION. SHE WAS UNSURE WHICH FACTION POLITBURO MEMBER PHOUNE SIPRASEUTH BELONGED TO.

2. THE LAO WOMAN TOLD EMBASSY OFFICER THAT THE LAO PEOPLE DISTRUST KAYSONE BECAUSE OF HIS VIETNAMSE SYMPATHIES AND SAID THEY ARE FED UP WITH THE VIETNAMSE WHO THEY FEEL ARE EXPLOITING LAOS. "EVERYONE KNOWS THAT THE VIETNAMESE ARE DEMANDING FULL REPAYMENT FOR THE AID THEY GIVE LAOS." ACCORDING TO THE WOMAN, WHOSE FAMILY OWNS A WOOD WORKING FACTORY, "THE TRUCKS WHICH ARE USED TO HAUL GOODS INTO LAOS FROM VINH DON'T RETURN EMPTY. THEY ARE FILLED WITH BEAUTIFUL LAO TEAK WHEN THEY GO BACK TO VIETNAM."

3. ON THE OTHER HAND, SHE SAID THAT PHOUMI VONGVICHIT IS REPECTED BY THE LAO PEOPLE. "PHOUMI IS AN EFFECTIVE PUBLIC SPEAKER. HE SPEAKS SO THAT ALL LEVELS OF THE POPULATION CAN UNDERSTAND; HE SPEAKS WITH PATRIOTISM, AND LOVE OF LAOS." NONETHELESS, THE LAO WOMAN BELIEVES THAT THE FACTION LED BY KAYSONE FIRMLY CONTROLS POWER WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT. SHE DOES NOT THINK THAT THE LAO NATIONALIST FACTION WILL BE ABLE TO WREST POWER AWAY FROM THE PRO-VIETNAMSESE FACTION AT THIS TIME.

4. COMMENT: THIS IS ONE MORE VERSION OF THE PRAGMATIST VERSUS HARDLINER, OR, IN THIS FORMULATION, THE NATIONALIST VERSUS PRO-VIETNAMESE "SPLIT" IN THE LAO LEADERSHIP. INTERESTINGLY, THIS SOURCE PLACES NOUHAK AMONG THE "HARDLINERS" OR "PRO-VIETNAMESE." ONLY TWO OTHERS OF THE NINE SEPARATE VERSIONS WE HAVE TABULATED SO FAR PUT NOUHAK IN THIS CATEGORY. THREE OF THE NINE PUT HIM IN THE "PRAGMATIST" OR "NATIONALIT" CATEGORY AND SUGGEST THE IMPORTANCE OF A RIVALRY BETWEEN HIM AND KAYSONE.
ALL NINE PUT KAYSONE IN THE "HARDLINER" CATEGORY AND PHOUMI VONGVICHIT ON THE "PRAGMATIST" SIDE. ALTHOUGH THIS SOURCE DOES NOT KNOW WHERE TO PLACE PHOUNE SIPRASEUTH, HER LINEAUP OF THE THE OTHERS FOLLOWS THE GENERAL TREND. THE HARDER PERSONALITIES WHO ALSO HAPPEN TO BE THE ORE POLTICALLY SIGNIFICANT TYPES LINE UP NATURALLY ENOUGH AS THE "HARDLINERS" OR "PRO-VIETNAMESE"; THE SOFTER PERSONALITIES WHO ALSO SEEM TO BE THE LESS RELEVANT POLITICALLY FIND THEMSELVES IN THE "PRAGMATIST" OR "NATIONALIST" SIDE. WE ARE NOT SURE HOW MUCH ALL THIS DEMONOLOGY IS WORTH
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BUT WE AGREE WITH THE SOURCE'S CONCLUSION THAT KAYSONE AT PRESENT FIRMLY CONTROLS POWER WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT. HE IS ALSO PRO-VIETNAMESE AND NOBODY IS GOING TO WREST ANYTHING AWAY FROM HIM UNLESS THE VIETNAMESE LET THEM.
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